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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 08/24/07

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Prime Minister's schedule, August 23

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

August 24, 2007

Morning:

Left Palam Air Force Station in Delhi, India, by a government plane. Arrived at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose CCU in Kolkata. Attended an opening ceremony of the India-Japan Culture Center.

Noon

Met Prasanta Pal, the eldest son of the late Indian judge Radhabinod Pal at the Tokyo Tribunal of War Criminals, at a hotel. Attended a luncheon party held by the West Bengal state government. Afternoon Visited the Tagore House and then the Chandra Bose Memorial.

vening

Left Chandra Bose CCU by a government plane.

Night

Arrived at Kuala Lumpur Airport in Malaysia. Stayed at the Hotel Nikko Kuala Lumpur.

4) Japan, US, Australia to hold first summit on Sept. 8

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)

August 24, 2008

Japan, the United States, and Australia will hold their first

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trilateral summit in Sydney, Australia, on Sept. 8, according government sources yesterday. In the trilateral talks, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, US President George W. Bush, and Australian Prime Minister John Howard will confirm the importance of trilateral security cooperation, focusing on North Korea's nuclear development problem and China's military buildup. Japan is now carrying out final coordination on a possibility of proposing in the meeting regularizing trilateral talks.

The trilateral meeting will be held on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit to start on Sept. 8 in Sydney.

In addition to the Japan-US alliance and the US-Australia alliance, Japan and Australia signed this March a Japan-Australia joint security declaration proposing the strengthening of bilateral cooperation on the security front. Following this, the three countries agreed on the view that it is beneficial for them to strengthen summit-level cooperation in dealing with North Korea's problem and marine salvage, as well as in countering terrorism.

The three leaders are expected to agree to call on China to make its military buildup program more transparent. Prime Minister Abe plans to stress the need for North Korea to implement the agreement reached in the six-party talks on its nuclear development problem.

Japan, the US, and Australia established in March of last year a framework for strategic dialogue by their foreign ministers and state secretary. This June, their first defense ministerial meeting was held in Singapore.

5) Cooperation from India to combat climate change seems difficult

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)

August 24, 2007

Kimitaka Nishiyama, New Delhi

The major objective of Prime Minister Abe's visit to India this time was to bring it into a common framework against global warming. Prime Minister Singh of India praised Abe's "Cool Earth 50," a concept intended to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and said he would work together for that purpose. But this is taken to mean that the way for bilateral dialogue in this regard has now been just opened. Given Singh's remarks that "the important thing is to strike a balance between environmental preservation and economic growth," it has become even clearer that it is very difficult to involve India in an emission reduction scheme.

"Cool Earth 50" sets a long-term target of halving the emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 and suggests three principles on the creation of a post-Kyoto Protocol, which will be applied to years beyond 2013: (1) having all major emitters participate in the new

framework; (2) creating a flexible framework that will give consideration to each country's circumstances; and (3) striking a balance between environmental preservation and economic growth via energy-saving technology.

Abe, who is aiming to obtain cooperation from major emitters like the United States, China, and India, has elicited a positive stance from the US and China when he had separate summit talks in April with the leaders of the two countries. In the Group of Eight (G-8)

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major industrialized countries summit in Germany in June, as well, the G-8 members shared the same perception.

In order for Abe to take the lead on measures against global warming in preparation for the 2008 G-8 summit in Lake Toya, Hokkaido, it is essential to obtain cooperation from the fifth largest emitter in the world, India. At a joint press briefing, Abe blew his horn, saying: "(Prime Minister Singh) has expressed his resolve toward an effective framework to be applied in 2013 and beyond. I deem this as a step forward."

According to a Japanese government official, however, the view prevalent in the Japanese government is that India is less eager than China. Singh praised (Abe's) "Cool Earth 50," but this, too, is seen as simply expressing agreement in general terms because that concept is milder than a package of measures to reduce emissions the European Union is advancing.

6) Abe meets son of Judge Pal, who built foundation of Japan-India relations

SANKEI (Page 5) (Abridged slightly)
August 24, 2007

Yasushi Sugimoto, Kolkata

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, now visiting India, met with Proshanto Pal, the eldest son of the late Radhabinod Pal, who served as a judge at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, at a hotel in Kolkata on the morning of August 23 (afternoon of Aug. 23, Japan time). Pal was the sole dissenting judge at the Allied tribunal that condemned to death wartime Japanese leaders. Abe praised the Indian judge's conduct that eventually enhanced the friendship between Japan and India.

In a dissenting opinion, Pal questioned the legitimacy of the tribunal and criticized the atomic bombing of Japan. Abe said to Proshanto Pal: "Even to this day, many Japanese revere your father. He was one of the persons who contributed to building the foundation of Japan-India relations. I think advancing bilateral relations was Judge Pal's wish. Relations between Japan and India are very strong today."

Proshanto Pal visited Japan in 1966 with his father and met former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, Abe's grandfather. Recalling that trip, Pal said, "It has been a long time since I met Mr. Kishi." Pal also gave Abe a framed black-and-white group photo including Kishi, his father, and himself, saying: "I am certain that you will exert yourself to improve relations between India and Japan, as Mr. Kishi did." In response Abe said: "I will make utmost efforts for enhancing bilateral relations."

Asked in the Diet about the Class-A war criminals who were convicted at the tribunal, Abe said: "Under domestic law, there were not war criminals." Through his meeting with Proshanto Pal, Abe also intended to expose the existence of diverse historical perceptions in Asia by playing up India's response as clearly distinct from China, which has repeatedly criticized the Japanese prime minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine on the grounds of the enshrinement of Class-A war criminals there.

Abe also visited the memorial to Chandra Bose, who fought with Japan

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in the last major war and is now known as the father of independence of India.

7) DPJ mulls Afghan humanitarian aid

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
August 24, 2007

The leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), standing against the idea of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, will consider incorporating humanitarian and reconstruction assistance measures for Afghanistan in its counterproposal, party officials said yesterday. There were voices from among the DPJ's conservative lawmakers concerning the party's course of action. "If we just cry out against extending the law, and if we do not show our own idea of what Japan will do, our party's governing competence will be called into question," one junior lawmaker of the party said.

DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa told DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama on Aug. 20: "The idea of using armed force to eliminate terrorism failed in Iraq, and it doesn't go well in Afghanistan, either. If we can work out some measures to help root out poverty (as a breeding ground for terrorism), that's good."

The DPJ will launch a new lineup of executive officers on Aug. 31. After that, the DPJ will hold a meeting of its foreign affairs and defense panel to discuss specific measures in earnest. In September, the DPJ will send a fact-finding team to the United States, Britain, France, and Germany to explore effective assistance measures mainly for infrastructure construction, public health and medical support, food aid, and job creation. The DPJ is also considering civilian participation in a provisional reconstruction team (PRT) as well as funding cooperation for nongovernmental organizations.

8) Extraordinary Diet session to focus concentration on antiterrorism law, deliberations on which are expected to begin on Sept. 26

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Almost full)
August 24, 2007

The government and the ruling coalition yesterday undertook final coordination to convene on Sept. 10 an extraordinary session of the Diet, which will discuss the question of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law and which will last some 60 days. The ruling parties intend to begin deliberations on a bill revising the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law in late September and get the bill adopted by the Lower House by the end of that month, but the opposition parties are certain to raise objections to the bill.

Referring to this sudden move by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) leadership to undertake coordination concerning the convocation of the extraordinary Diet session, one LDP member explained: "They appeared highly upset at the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ or Minshuto) President Ozawa's remark that '(the LDP) is in the state of being brain dead.'"

Secretary General Nakagawa and other executives initially intended

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to have a new lineup of the leadership determine when to convene the extraordinary Diet session and how long the session would last. But Ozawa made provocative remarks in a speech on Aug. 21 like this:

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"When will the Diet be opened? The government and the ruling coalition appear to be in the state of being brain dead." Apparently, the LDP leadership were reacting sharply to this remark.

Bearing in mind the expiration of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law on Nov. 1, the ruling coalition intends to have the extraordinary Diet session last until early November. As the purpose of the convocation of that session, an LDP senior member in charge

of Diet affairs said: "The session will generally focus on the handling of the bill revising the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law."

Behind this is the ruling bloc's concern that if the session lasts too long, it would give the DPJ an opportunity to pursue the LDP on the pension issue and the "politics-and-money" issue that may involve new cabinet members. If that happens, "the shuffled Abe cabinet would suffer damage," a government official concerned noted.

Assuming that the extraordinary Diet session will be convened on Sept. 10, the ruling coalition has charted this short timetable for the Diet session: (1) question-and-answer sessions will take place in both the chambers of the Diet on Sept. 12-14; (2) questions-and-answer sessions in both the Lower and Upper House Budget Committees on Sept. 18-21; and (3) an explanation of the bill revising the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law will be given at the full session of the plenary session of the Lower House on Sept. 25 and the bill will clear the Lower House on Sept. 28.

Substantive discussion on the revision bill at the Lower House Committee on Prevention of Terrorism is expected to begin on Sept. 26 if things go smoothly. This committee has been convened three times until now when the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law was extended in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Following this precedent, the ruling coalition plans to open this committee for three consecutive days on Sept. 26-28.

DPJ Secretary General Hatoyama, however, yesterday said, "Our party needs to come up with a more substantive policy (than the current Antiterrorism Special Measures Law)," and he again made it clear that his party would oppose the bill and call for full-scale deliberations. A preliminary skirmish has thus already started.

A timetable planned by the ruling coalition for the extraordinary Diet session in September

Major events

Sept. 10

The extraordinary Diet session will be convened. The prime minister will deliver a policy speech.

Sept. 12-14 Questions-and-answers session in both the chambers of the Diet.

Sept. 18-21

The budget committee will be convened in both the chambers of the Diet.

Sept. 25

An explanation of the bill revising the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law will be given in the Lower House plenary session.

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Sept. 26

Deliberations on the revision bill will begin at the Lower House special committee.

Late September

The revision bill will be put to the vote at the Lower House special committee and clear the Lower House (if things go smoothly).

9) Groups campaigning across the nation in opposition to extending the Anti-terrorist Special Measures Law

AKAHATA (Page 1) (Full)

August 24, 2007

The Central Action Committee for Revoking the (Japan-US) Security Treaty and action committees across the country yesterday carried out campaigns and petition-signing activities in each part of the country opposing the extension of the Anti-terrorist Special Measures Law. The appeal went out to oppose the extension of the "terrorist special measures law" that supports a retaliatory war against Afghanistan by America and other countries. The law that

allows the Maritime Self-Defense Force to provide refueling service for British and US warships in the Indian Ocean will expire on Nov. 11.

In Tokyo, members of the Tokyo Action Committee stood outside the West Entrance of Shinjuku Station and campaigned. Many people stopped to talk with them. A woman (36) from Saitama Prefecture stated: "I am absolutely against Japan cooperating with the war. It only makes terrorism worse. They only retaliate all the more." A young man (18) who is the child of a Japanese and Iraqi said, "Wars only make weapons' manufacturers rich." His face clouded over when he added, "I cannot even visit Iraq now."

The Self-Defense Forces have supplied fuel and water for the past five and a half years, with the cost of the supplies totaling 22 billion yen. A man (55) from Kanagawa Prefecture stated: "Everybody would be happy if they pulled out. It would have been better to have spent the 22 billion yen somewhere else."

The action committee members made this appeal to the passersby: "Terrorism will not disappear by carrying out war. Japan, which has Article 9 in the Constitution, should stop cooperating with that war."

10) Will Koike, Moriya continue their feud?

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
August 24, 2007

Speaking before reporters in New Delhi last night, local time, Defense Minister Koike refuted criticism against her emerging even from ruling party members for feuding with Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya over who should succeed Moriya. Koike said: "Keeping in mind the organizational restructuring (including disbanding the Defense Facilities Administrative Agency) planned for Sept. 1, I decided to change personnel. It is not correct to think that I have lost my mind and inserted myself into personnel matters."

Koike indicated that she had decided to dismiss Moriya in part because there were problems with the Defense Ministry's information-management system, citing the case of leakage of

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classified information on the Aegis system. She said: "I wanted to say who was responsible. We can't say its another person's problem." Koike also criticized Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki, who decided to put off the appointment of a new vice defense minister until after the planned cabinet reshuffle, remarking: "I have some doubts about his seriousness toward the reorganization of the Defense Ministry."

Meanwhile, Moriya expressed his displeasure at Koike in a press conference in the Defense Ministry yesterday: "I follow the minister's decision on my retirement from office, but I told her that she should have consulted with me about my replacement."

Regarding the fact that he had involved Prime Minister Abe and the chief cabinet secretary in the feud, Moriya expressed regret with a wry smile: "I feel sorry to have caused a sensation just before leaving the government." Some speculate that he might become an advisor to the Defense Ministry after retirement. Asked about this possibility, he just replied: "I would like to take a rest for a while, though this is a suggestion from the minister."

11) New destroyer takes water

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2007

A new destroyer for the Maritime Self-Defense Force took water yesterday. The 13,500-ton destroyer, codenamed DDH Hyuga, carries helicopters on board. The Defense Ministry held a launching ceremony yesterday at IHI Marine United's Yokohama dockyard.

The DDH Hyuga is Japan's first 10,000-ton-plus destroyer with a continuous deck from the bow to the stem. The destroyer is not

designed to base fighter jets for their landings and takeoffs. However, it looks like an aircraft carrier. One may say Japan will have an aircraft carrier in the future. It has an overall length of 197 meters and a maximum beam of 33 meters. Its building cost was approximately 100 billion yen.

12) China in run-up to flattop possession

SANKEI (Page 1) (Abridged)
August 24, 2007

BEIJING-China is aiming to possess aircraft carriers for its navy, and its military has placed orders with foreign countries for carrier-borne fighter jets, a military source watching trends in China's armed forces revealed yesterday. China has not unveiled anything about its plan to build aircraft carriers. However, China is believed to have been in the run-up to possessing flattops. Japanese and US defense officials are paying close attention to the trends of China.

Those carrier-borne aircrafts have been ordered "for testing purposes," according to the source. One of those ordered test version models is the Sukhoi-27 or Su-27 for short, a fighter jet developed by Russia. They include the Su-33, an improved version of the Su-27 as a carrier-borne fighter. China is believed to have placed orders with Russia or Ukraine for 10 planes or so. The source presumes that China has ordered the test aircrafts in order to use them the purpose of evaluating their performance as trainers and carrier-borne fighters.

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China seems to have imported some braking equipment systems for carrier-borne aircraft's deck landing. They include wiring used to hook and arrest carrier-based aircraft upon their touchdown. In addition, China is believed to have been researching various control and electronic systems that are believed to be used for aircraft carriers.

13) Foreign Ministry to request 13 PERCENT increase in ODA in next budget

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2007

The Foreign Ministry decided yesterday to request approximately 517 billion yen, up 13.9 PERCENT over the initial budget for this fiscal year, for budgetary allocations on official development assistance (ODA) for next fiscal year. The ministry will ask for about 32 billion yen as expenses to finance preparations for the Lake Toya Summit in Japan next year.

The total amount of budgetary allocations requested by the Foreign Ministry is 779 billion yen, up 16.1 PERCENT over the previous year. To bolster the foundation of its diplomatic capabilities, the ministry will request establishing new overseas diplomatic properties in eight locations, such as Qingdao, China, and employing 240 more staff members. Of the ODA budget, about 181 billion yen will be used to finance measures to deal with global warming and other global issues. The ministry also hopes to keep ODA funds for Africa at the same level as the previous fiscal year.

14) Ruling coalition in coordination on plan to convene extra Diet session on Sept. 10, term of session about 60 days

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2007

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its coalition partner, New Komeito, held yesterday a meeting of their secretaries general and Diet Affairs Committee chairmen in the Diet building. The LDP and New Komeito agreed to convene an extraordinary Diet session on Sept. 10, which will last about 60 days through early November. The two parties intend to coordinate the plan with the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei), as well as with the opposition camp.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is expected to participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to be held in Sydney on Sept. 8-9. The ruling coalition wishes to hold an opening ceremony of the extra session and the prime minister's policy speech on Sept. 10 soon after Abe returns from his overseas tour, and interpellation speeches by representatives of political parties on Sept. 12-14.

LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Toshihiro Nikai told reporters:

"It is only natural for us to consider deliberations on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which will expire on Nov. 1. We want to discuss with the Kantei the fall session plan, as well as the handling of bills carried over from the latest regular session."

15) Growing mood of backing away from assuming cabinet posts

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TOKYO SHIMUBN (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2007

With a reshuffle of the cabinet coming up on Aug. 27, there are unexpectedly few Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers seeking to be appointed to cabinet posts, and there remains even a mood of shying away from joining the reshuffled cabinet. The public will take a severe view of new cabinet ministers in connection with issues involving money and politics. It's no wonder that calls for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to quit will become stronger any time. Therefore, it seems that many LDP lawmakers do not want to risk their political life.

Up until Junichiro Koizumi became prime minister, the names of LDP Lower House members serving in their fifth and sixth term in the Diet were put on a list of recommendations automatically. Former Prime Minister Koizumi, however, adopted an appointment style of sounding out lawmakers on their interest in serving in cabinet posts.

It won't be surprising if LDP lawmakers seek to be appointed to cabinet posts since Abe followed Koizumi's appointment style. But the dominant mood in the LDP is that many party members are trying to watch calmly how Abe will rebuild his administration.

The biggest reason for this situation is that Abe's grip on the party has weakened.

Abe has remained in the prime minister's post, although his LDP suffered a historical defeat in the July House of Councillors election. Jiji Press found in its poll on Aug. 3-6 that the Abe cabinet's support rate dropped to 22.6 PERCENT -- the lowest ever since the cabinet was inaugurated.

If the prime minister fails to put an end to the declining approval rating for his cabinet, a view calling on Abe to step down will become strong with an eye on the next Lower House election. As a result, a drive to remove Abe from the premiership may become obvious. If the cabinet resigns as a body, the terms of new cabinet ministers will be short. Therefore, it is understandable that LDP lawmakers choose to wait for the next chance rather than to serve in the reshuffled Abe cabinet.

One former cabinet minister said: "It's better not to get on a sinking boat."

Lawmakers have strong interest in the issue of money and politics, following political fund scandals involving Agriculture Minister Akagi and other ministers. Should inappropriate use of political funds be found in new cabinet ministers' political fund reports, their accountability will be severely required.

Even mid-level lawmakers, who have reached positions to be appointed as cabinet ministers, are reluctant to assume cabinet posts.

LDP lawmakers corrected their political funds reports in succession this month because the party's reform implementation headquarters

advised re-checking of political funds reports. Most of the lawmakers were those who looking forward to becoming cabinet ministers.

Diet members appear to have a desire to assume a minister post at
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least once.

16) New Komeito prefectoral chapter representative suggests "Cooperation with the government from outside the cabinet"

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
August 24, 2007

The New Komeito held a national convention at party headquarters on Aug. 22 to examine the results of the July Upper House election. In the session, a representative from one prefectoral chapter suggested that the party rethink the current coalition government between the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito and consider instead the possibility of cooperation with the government from outside the cabinet, sources revealed.

According to an official concerned, this representative noted: "Our party should examine the past eight years of the LDP-New Komeito coalition government. One idea is for the New Komeito to distance itself from the LDP and cooperate with the LDP from outside the cabinet."

Secretary General Kitagawa responded, "There's no doubt that the

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LDP-New Komeito coalition government has propelled reforms. The LDP-New Komeito line is unshakable." But the meeting revealed that local chapters of the New Komeito, which had suffered a staggering defeat in the Upper House, were wavering on continuing the coalition.

17) LDP report on Upper House race result cites gap between Abe policy and popular will, criticizes public relations strategy

Mainichi Shimbun (Page 2) (Full)
August 24, 2007

By Hirohiko Sakaguchi and So Watanabe

The overall contents of the final report on the causes of the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) defeat in the recent Upper House election was disclosed on 23 August. The report was compiled by an LDP panel charged with analyzing the party's setback (chaired by Yoshio Yatsu, director of the LDP Election Strategy Headquarters General Affairs). The report candidly criticized the apparent gap between policies advocated by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the will of the public, and it urged the carrying out of "administrative management in line with the public's views." The report also noted that the public relations strategy stressed by the Prime Minister's Official Residence and the LDP was unable to win the hearts of the people. The report will be submitted to the party's General Assembly on 24 August.

The final report concluded that the party failed to highlight the following policies as campaign issues: the "beautiful country" policy; the policy to "break away from the post-war regime"; and the reform line. The report also said that the opposition parties managed to take the initiative away from the opposition camp in the election race because of their "livelihood first" strategy.

With regard to the focal issues of the appointments of cabinet ministers as a reward for supporting the prime minister, the return to the LDP of lawmakers who opposed privatizing the state-run postal services, and the "money and politics" scandals, the report stressed

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the issues "gave the public the image that Prime Minister is on the

side of politicians in Nagata-cho and not on the side of the general public." It then opined, "The public might have called into question his leadership and ability to govern."

The report pointed out five factors that caused the LDP's defeat. These factors include the three "adverse winds": the issue of missing pension records; the "politics and money" issue; gaffes by ministers and scandals involving them. The report also cited a "rebellion in provinces" and the decrease in the number of local assembly members and local government heads.

MESERVE